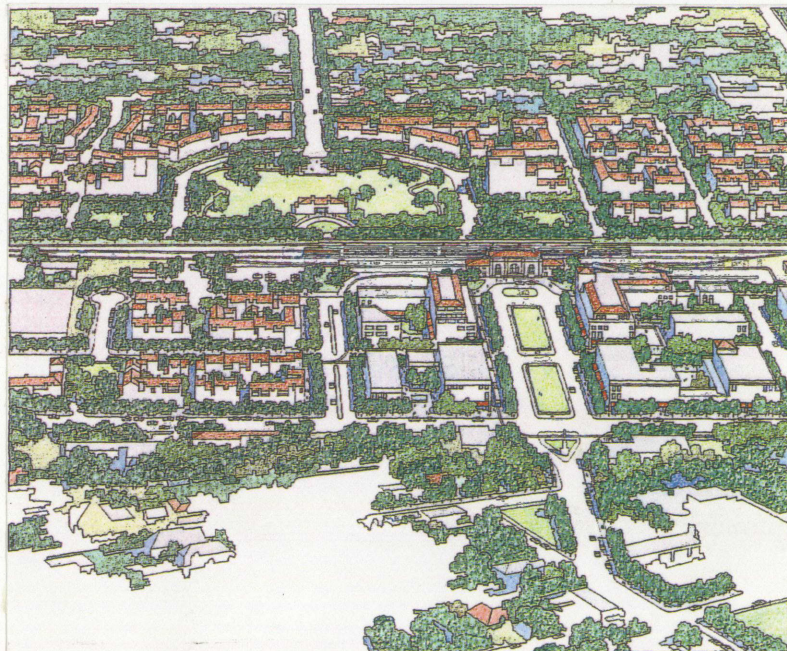


MIDTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN



City of San Jose

December 1992

MIDTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

*Adopted by the City Council
December 8, 1992*

City of San Jose

Table of Contents

Plan Overview

<i>Summary</i>	1
<i>Background</i>	2
<i>Scope of the Specific Plan</i>	5
<i>Planning Approach and Process</i>	5
<i>Task Force Objectives</i>	6

Opportunities and Constraints

<i>Historic Context</i>	9
<i>Downtown and Regional Context</i>	11
<i>Land Use Context</i>	12
<i>Transportation Context</i>	16
<i>Open Space and Community Facilities</i>	20
<i>Market Overview</i>	21
<i>The Planning Subareas</i>	23

The Vision For Midtown

<i>Create a Pattern of Development That Reinforces Transit</i>	29
<i>Provide a Diversity of Housing Opportunities That Establishes</i> <i>Viable and Livable Neighborhoods</i>	30
<i>Preserve Viable Industrial and Commercial-Service Uses Within Midtown</i> .	31
<i>Create an Extensive System of Pedestrian Ways and Open Space</i>	32
<i>Balance Circulation Needs With Considerations of Livability</i>	33
<i>Complement and Extend Adjacent Residential and Commercial Areas</i> <i>Surrounding Midtown</i>	34

Land Use and Urban Design

<i>The Land Use Map</i>	37
<i>Illustrative Plan and Development Program</i>	42
<i>Cahill West Subarea</i>	48
<i>Sears/Saddlerack Subarea</i>	61
<i>Cahill East Subarea</i>	68
<i>Vasona Mixed-Use Subarea</i>	78
<i>Lincoln-Auzerais Subarea</i>	83

Community Facilities

<i>Introduction</i>	87
<i>Parks and Community Centers</i>	88
<i>Schools</i>	94
<i>Child Care</i>	96

Circulation

<i>Introduction</i>	99
<i>Cahill Station Improvements</i>	100
<i>Transit Improvements</i>	102
<i>Vehicular Circulation</i>	102
<i>Parking</i>	108
<i>Roadway Design and Pedestrian Circulation</i>	110
<i>Bicycle Circulation</i>	112
<i>Transportation Systems Management</i>	113

Utilities

<i>Storm Drainage</i>	117
<i>Sanitary Sewers</i>	118
<i>Water Supply</i>	118
<i>Energy</i>	122

Implementation

<i>Consistency with the General Plan</i>	125
<i>Land Use Regulation</i>	126
<i>Financing Alternatives for Infrastructure and</i> <i>Community Facility Improvements</i>	134
<i>Administration of the Midtown Specific Plan</i>	137

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	140
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List of Figures

Figure Number	Title	Page
1	<i>Regional Context</i>	3
2	<i>San Jose Context</i>	4
3	<i>Neighborhood Context</i>	10
4	<i>Existing Land Use</i>	13
5	<i>Urban Design: Linkages</i>	15
6	<i>Urban Design: Edges</i>	16
7	<i>Urban Design: Visual/Historic Features</i>	18
8	<i>Major On-Site Development Constraints</i>	19
9	<i>Transit/Rail Context</i>	20
10	<i>Open Space Context</i>	23
11	<i>The Planning Subareas</i>	25
12	<i>Land Use Map</i>	37
13	<i>Illustrative Plan</i>	41
14	<i>Development Program</i>	42
15	<i>Maximum Height</i>	43
16	<i>Land Use Densities and Intensities</i>	44
17	<i>Setbacks</i>	45
18	<i>Community Facilities</i>	87
19	<i>Transit</i>	99
20	<i>Roadways</i>	101
21	<i>Pedestrian Circulation</i>	109

Figure Number	Title	Page
22	<i>Illustrative Street Sections</i>	<i>111</i>
23	<i>Bikeways</i>	<i>114</i>
24	<i>Storm Drainage System</i>	<i>119</i>
25	<i>Sanitary Sewer System</i>	<i>121</i>
26	<i>Water Supply</i>	<i>123</i>
27	<i>Electrical Lines</i>	<i>127</i>
28	<i>General Plan Designations</i>	<i>123</i>

List of Tables

Table Number	Title	Page
1	<i>Land Use Matrix</i>	38
2	<i>Relationship of Midtown Park Program to City Goals</i>	88
3	<i>Estimated Number of Total Students at Buildout</i>	93

Plan Overview



The 210-acre Midtown area is strategically located in relation to downtown San Jose and the region's transportation system.

Summary

The Midtown Specific Plan provides a vision for an area of San Jose that is undergoing considerable transition and change. The purpose of the plan is to guide the evolution of this 210-acre industrial and commercial service area in a way that will encourage coordinated development, responsive to citywide and regional objectives as well as local and neighborhood considerations. The goal is to create a new mixed-use community that includes high-density commercial and residential uses oriented to transit, while maintaining some industrial and service commercial uses.

The intent of the Specific Plan is to encourage investment and new development within Midtown through a clearly established public commitment to the intensification of the area, and through a clear pattern of land uses that provides investors with a level of certainty regarding the future form and character of development. It is not the intent of the plan to force existing businesses out of the area; rather, the plan provides policies and guidelines that encourage new development to complement and enhance existing uses, allowing for these uses to remain as long as they wish and as long as market conditions dictate. The plan recognizes that the full buildout of the Midtown Specific Plan will

take many years to realize, and that to avoid piecemeal decisions and foreclosed opportunities, such a vision must be set forth now.

More specifically, the Midtown Specific Plan provides for:

- The intensification of development immediately adjacent to Cahill Station and to the future West San Carlos light rail transit (LRT) station to a mixture of residential and commercial uses that will create an employee and resident population in close proximity to transit, and that will strengthen these areas as pedestrian-oriented activity centers within San Jose. The plan provides for up to 920,000 square feet of new office development to occur over the next 20 to 30 years.
- The creation of a new residential community of up to 2,940 dwelling units, offering a wide range of housing choices including apartments, townhouses, condominiums, single room occupancy units, senior citizen and congregate care facilities, and live/work studios. A major objective of the plan is to meet housing needs and promote a diverse and heterogeneous community of residents within Midtown.
- The preservation and intensification of industrial and commercial-service uses within Midtown, through the designation of lands for combined Commercial-Industrial use, and through policies that ensure compatible land use relationships with existing industrial and commercial uses that remain. The plan provides for up to 300,000 square feet of additional industrial/commercial uses within Midtown.
- The reinforcement of existing Neighborhood Business Districts along The Alameda and West San Carlos Street through the concentration of commercial and retail uses along these corridors. The plan provides for up to 335,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and entertainment-oriented uses along these key corridors.
- The creation of an extensive system of pedestrian ways and open spaces that promotes Midtown as a livable and walkable community. The plan provides for 13.5 acres of public parks, strategically located to promote a strong sense of community, to provide access and visibility from new and existing neighborhoods, and to enrich and activate the overall pedestrian experience.
- The development of a street pattern that extends the pedestrian character and scale of adjacent areas, accommodates project traffic, and avoids excessive vehicular through-movement within existing and future neighborhoods.
- The compatible relationship of Midtown with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. Through comprehensive urban design guidelines, the plan establishes an appropriate scale and pattern of development adjacent to the St. Leo's neighborhood on the west and the riparian corridor of Los Gatos Creek on the east.

Background

Midtown is a "J" shaped area located west of downtown San Jose and immediately east of the St. Leo's and Shasta-Hanchett neighborhoods. The area extends from The Alameda (generally between Sunol Street and Los Gatos Creek) to a line south of Auzerais Avenue, and then west to Meridian Avenue south of West San Carlos Street (see Figures 1 and 2).

The historic role of Midtown as a food processing, packaging and transshipment center began to subside in the 1950's, as urban development replaced the surrounding orchard lands and interstate trucking eclipsed rail as the predominant mode of distribution. Today, with the exception of Del Monte's facility at Auzerais Avenue and Sunol Street, most of the canning operations have been closed.

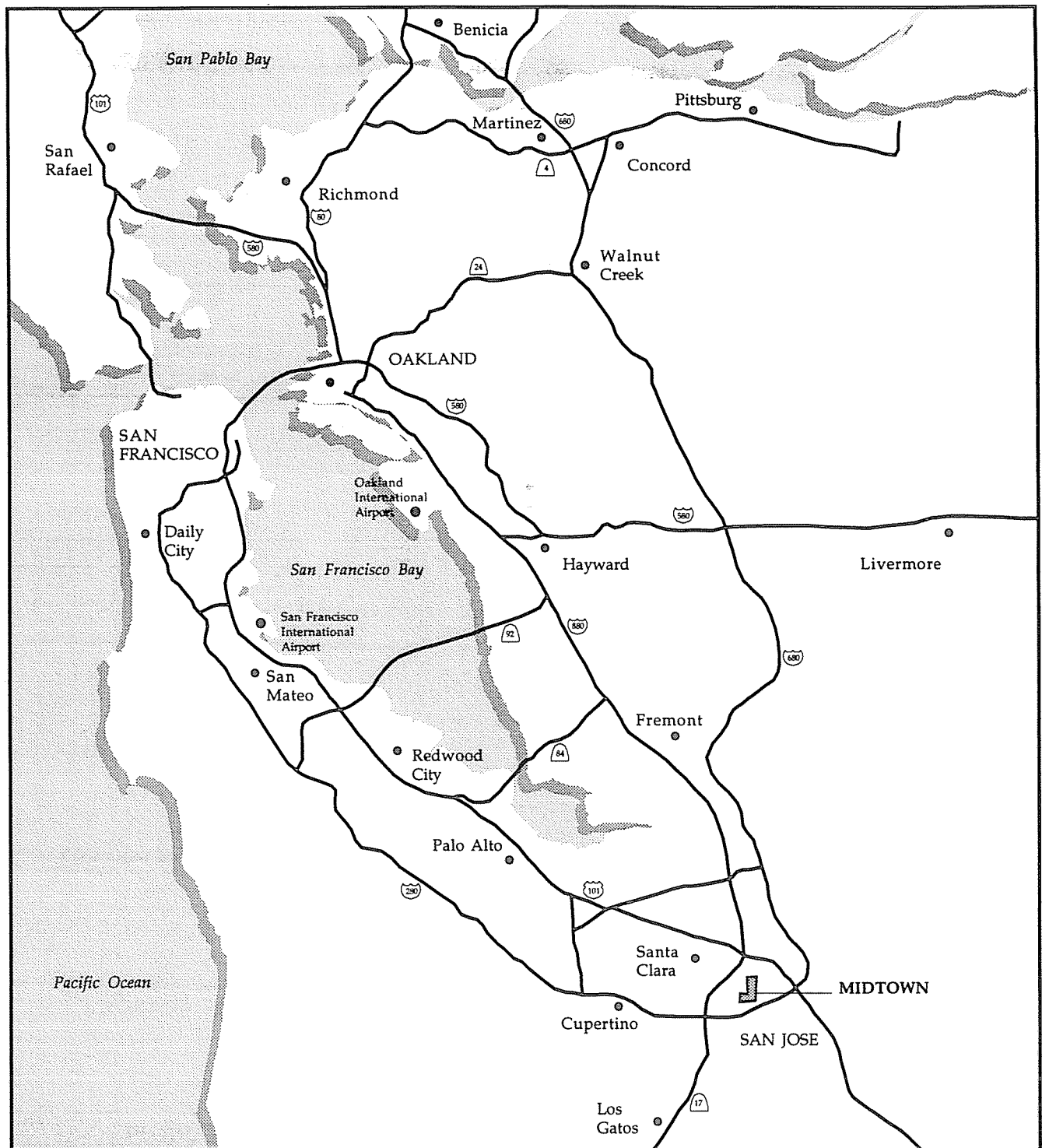


Figure 1
REGIONAL CONTEXT

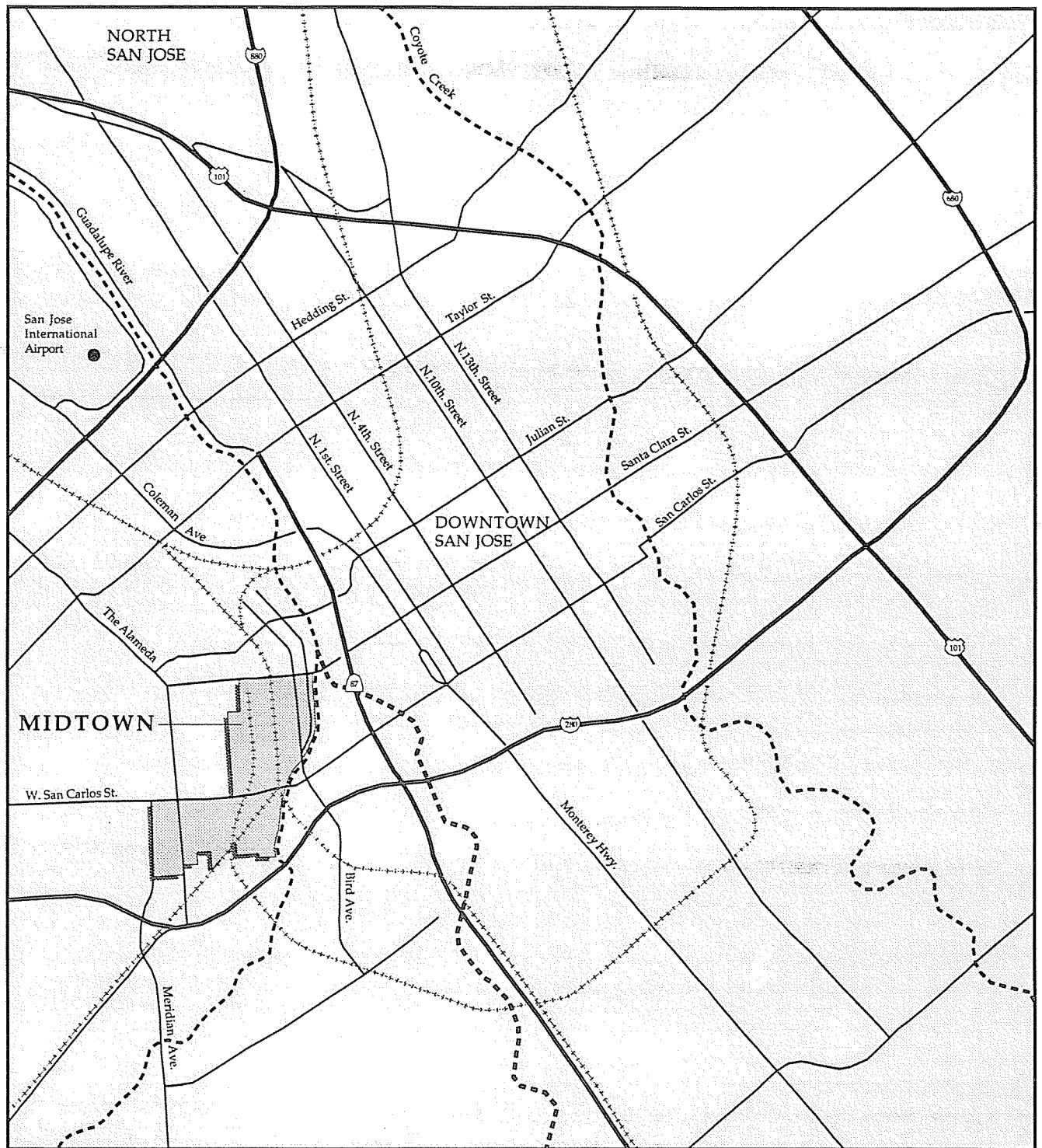


Figure 2
SAN JOSE CONTEXT

In spite of these closures, Midtown still functions as an important industrial and commercial service area, providing support to the adjacent downtown and the surrounding region. The area offers a convenient location for a range of businesses, including construction supplies, home improvements, flower sales, printing services, auto repair, and research and development.

In 1987, the San Jose City Council adopted the Lincoln-Auzerais Study, which included Midtown and additional areas to the south and east. With revitalization occurring in the adjacent downtown, the study recommended land use changes in Lincoln-Auzerais to support downtown, maintain adjacent neighborhoods, and allow continued industrial uses to reinforce the City's economic goals. Through this study, residential uses were first considered for portions of the Midtown area.

By the early 1990s, several factors contributed to the initiation of the Midtown Specific Plan process, including:

- The closure of Del Monte's West San Fernando Street plant and the availability of other major properties, such as the former Sears site, for new uses;
- The findings of the 1991 San Jose Housing Initiative Study, which identified significant opportunities for high-density housing along major transportation corridors within Midtown and beyond;
- The State's increased commitment to intercity and commuter rail transportation, evidenced by the passage of Proposition 116 by the voters in June of 1990, and the strategic role of Cahill Station within Midtown as one of the region's principal transportation centers; and
- The City's and County's intention to extend light rail transit service from the downtown to Cahill Station and the new Community Arena, and to provide for additional future transit extensions through Midtown along the Vasona corridor to Los Gatos; in addition,

the longer term goal to extend LRT service along West San Carlos Street and Stevens Creek Boulevard to Cupertino.

As a result of these factors, the City Council in 1991 directed the preparation of a Specific Plan for the newly defined Midtown area. The principal goal for the area is the creation of a vital mixed-use community with livable residential neighborhoods complemented by viable commercial and industrial businesses.

Scope of the Specific Plan

The Midtown Specific Plan establishes the location, intensity and character of land uses, the circulation pattern and necessary infrastructure improvements to support development, the location and configuration of parks and community facilities within the area, and the implementation actions required to realize the plan's objectives. As such, the Specific Plan provides detailed policy direction, elaborating upon the San Jose General Plan (Horizon 2000), which is the principal tool that guides growth and development within the city.

The Midtown Specific Plan is incorporated into the Horizon 2000 General Plan as the Midtown Planned Community. The General Plan describes the land uses permitted within Midtown and incorporates the major objectives and policies described in this plan.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified for the Midtown Specific Plan in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Planning Approach and Process

To guide the preparation of the Midtown Specific Plan, the City Council appointed a 19-member task force chaired by City Councilwoman Nancy Ianni. This group balanced a diverse range of interests and included representatives from adjacent commercial and residential districts,

Midtown property owners, the San Jose Unified School District, and the Planning, Housing and Parks and Recreation Commissions. The Task Force provided overall direction and guidance throughout the planning process. Over the course of the one-year process, biweekly meetings were held with the Task Force to discuss the progress of the plan, to review and refine alternatives, and to establish the policies presented in this document. Public comment and input was received at all of these meetings, providing the Task Force with a direct dialogue with the community.

In addition to the regular Task Force meetings, City staff and the consultant team conducted numerous focus discussions and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders and interest groups to better understand issues of concern and to provide clarification and explanation of the plan as it evolved. Community-wide workshops were also held at key points during the process to elicit input and comments. Under the direction of the Midtown Task Force, the plan was drafted to incorporate and balance the multiplicity of concerns and ideas expressed during the extensive public participation process.

The development of this plan has resulted from an iterative process of alternatives exploration and refinement. Alternatives focused on the realization of clearly stated objectives established by the Task Force early in the process. The alternatives were effective tools for focusing discussion, testing and evaluating concepts, and achieving general consensus within the Task Force for the ultimate concept.

Task Force Objectives

At the outset of the planning process, City staff and the consultant team worked with the Task Force to establish a list of objectives to guide the development of the Specific Plan. In addition to the input of the Task Force, the objectives build upon previous objectives articulated in the Lincoln-Auzerais Study of 1987. These include:

the avoidance of traffic impacts; the preservation of traditional industries; the protection and strengthening of existing neighborhoods; the implementation of the master plan and guidelines for Los Gatos Creek; and the reinforcement of General Plan policies.

A single goal was articulated for Midtown: *the creation of a vital mixed-use community oriented to existing and planned transit facilities and building upon the unique character and history of the area.*

Land Use

1. Configure land uses in Midtown (i.e., type, mix, density) in a manner that reinforces and maximizes transit ridership.
2. Create a pattern of land uses, open space and transportation facilities that strengthens pedestrian access within Midtown and provides linkages to downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Create a distinct image and identity for Midtown that reinforces the area as a diverse and urban mixed-use neighborhood with a strong sense of community.
4. Introduce land uses that complement the existing character of adjacent single-family neighborhoods; ensure that new development immediately adjacent to these neighborhoods has a similar height, scale and orientation as the historic fabric of single-family homes.
5. Encourage a wide range of housing types (e.g., live/work, townhouse, condominiums, SRO housing, apartments, etc.) that offers future residents viable alternatives to traditional single-family housing, and that can attract people with a diversity of income levels as well as cultural and professional backgrounds.
6. Orient commercial and retail uses in a manner that reinforces the existing Neighborhood Business Districts along The Alameda and West San Carlos Street.

7. Retain historic elements and features that convey the unique history and role of Midtown, and incorporate them within new development in a meaningful and viable manner.
8. Allow for the ongoing operation and/or logical phaseout of viable industrial and service uses within the area. Consider alternative locations for businesses within the area as needed.
9. Incorporate appropriate design measures to address the interface between industrial, residential, and other potentially conflicting uses. These measures would ensure the livability of the neighborhood and the viability of businesses by mitigating potential negative impacts.

Open Space, Parks and Community Facilities

10. Contribute to the realization of a citywide Bay to Ridge creek trail system, through the development of continuous public access facilities (bike path, pedestrian walkway) and through the implementation of the Los Gatos Creek Master Plan. Where feasible, preserve the riparian corridor along Los Gatos Creek.
11. Provide park facilities within Midtown that reinforce the sense of the Midtown neighborhood and that can also serve adjacent residential areas. In addition to traditional community and neighborhood parks, consider alternative park configurations that are appropriate to the desired urban character of the area.
12. Provide community facilities (e.g., community/senior centers, branch libraries, schools, child care) to the extent that they are required by new residential uses. Consider alternative prototypes for these facilities that are appropriate to the desired urban character of the area, and that reinforce a sense of neighborhood.

Transportation and Parking

13. Ensure the efficient operation of existing and planned transit improvements within Midtown to reduce auto dependency.
14. Create a pattern of roadways that serves future land uses within the district and avoids vehicular impacts (particularly north-south through-movement) within the adjacent neighborhoods. Design roadways in a manner that reflects objectives for reduced auto dependency and a strong pedestrian orientation.
15. Maximize shared parking opportunities between future development, the business districts, the Arena and Cahill Station, taking advantage of different peak-use characteristics. Provide sufficient parking to avoid overflow parking impacts within adjacent residential neighborhoods and business districts.

Implementation

16. Maximize, to the extent feasible, private developer and property owner contributions for the construction of community facilities, utilities, local roadways, and other improvements that will provide direct benefit and support to the planned development.
17. Aggressively pursue public funding of major infrastructure elements that will be of benefit to the larger community (e.g., Los Gatos Creek, transit, arterial roadways, etc.).
18. Identify and establish priorities for the infrastructure and service improvements needed to support the land use strategy of the Specific Plan.
19. Coordinate, to the extent feasible, public infrastructure investments related to other projects to maximize available resources to accomplish the objectives of the Midtown Specific Plan.

Opportunities and Constraints



Midtown's historic role as a food processing, packaging and transshipment center reached its peak in the early 20th century.

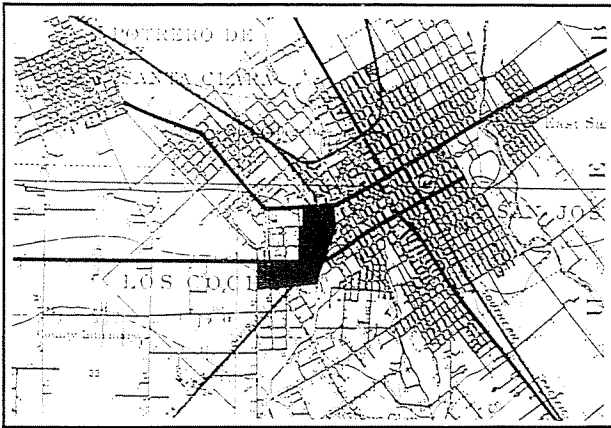
Historic Context

Midtown is located immediately west of downtown San Jose within an "J" shaped area of approximately 210 acres. Originally part of the Rancho de los Coches land grant along the historic Alameda, the Midtown area was located in the heart of the fertile Santa Clara Valley, which supported livestock, wheat, dairy and orchard farming. With the advent of rail transportation and the invention of the refrigerator rail car in the 1860s, Midtown became a thriving food processing, packaging and transshipment center. The proximity of the

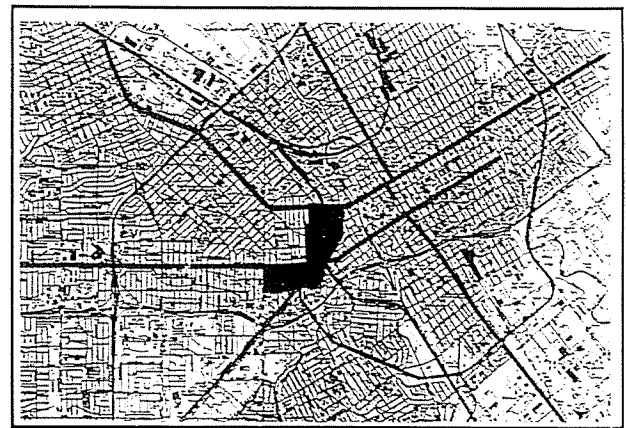
area to the fertile valley lands and fruit orchards, and to the diverse employment population of San Jose and Santa Clara, made the area a natural location for canneries, warehouses, cold storage facilities, and related industrial uses. By the late nineteenth century, produce canned in Midtown, Campbell and the Jackson-Taylor area accounted for the majority of the state's fruit exports.

Today, the historic role of Midtown is still in evidence:

- Del Monte operates a major canning facility in the vicinity of West San Carlos Street and Los Gatos Creek;



San Jose 1889
The Midtown District situated at the edge of the city served as a regional railroad transshipment and distribution center.



San Jose 1991
The City of San Jose now surrounds the Midtown District which no longer plays a key industrial role in the region.

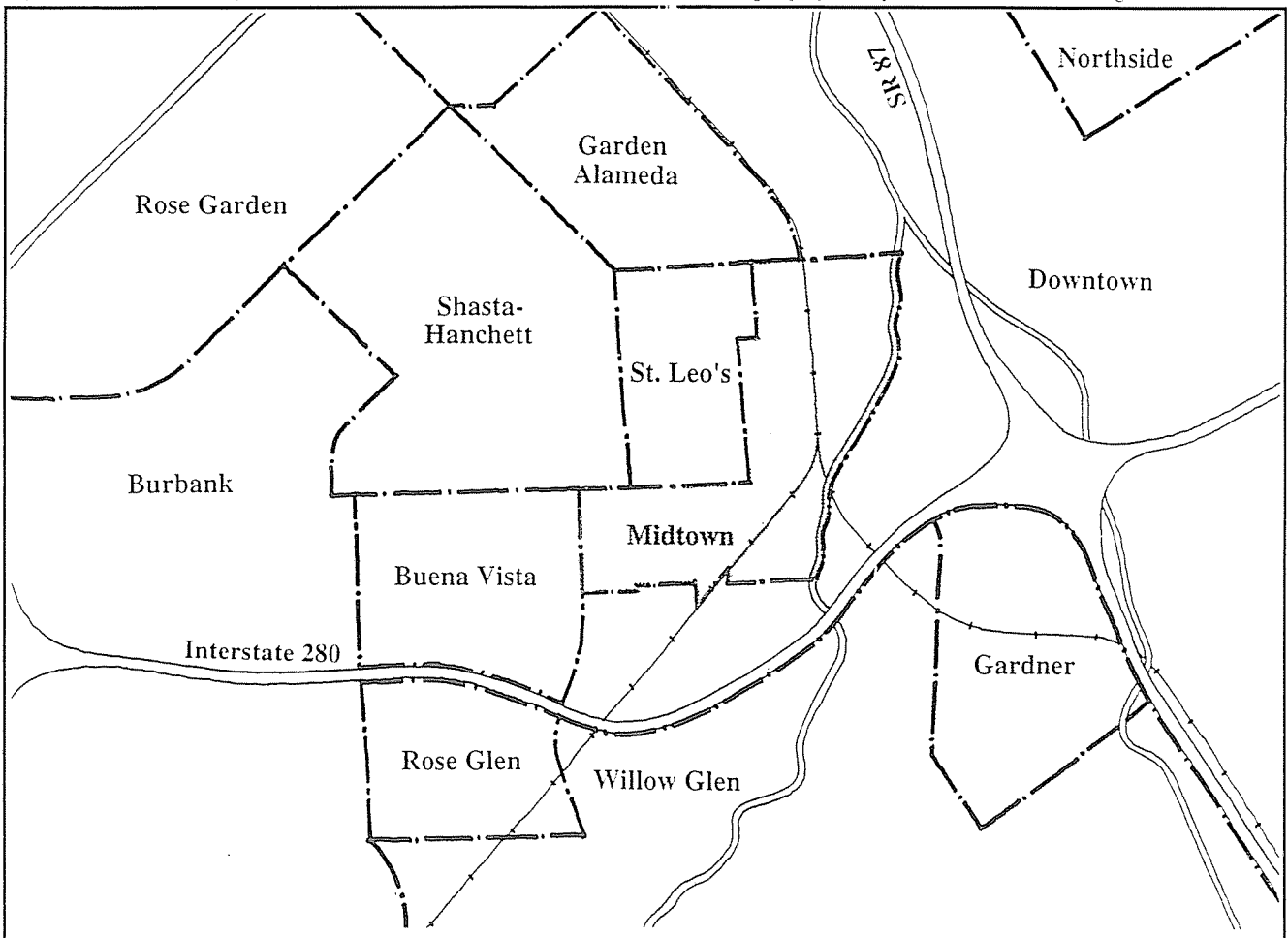


Figure 3
NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

- Cahill Station, built in the 1920s, continues to serve as the region's principal rail transportation terminal;
- Although not currently in use as such, the historic Western Pacific freight terminal completed in 1922 stands at the intersection of The Alameda and Bush Streets; and
- Many service commercial and light industrial uses remain within the area.

Since the 1950s, the canning and transshipment role of Midtown has declined in importance. The urbanization of the surrounding orchard lands and the emergence of interstate trucking as the predominant mode of transportation made the area less competitive with the Central Valley and other agricultural regions. Over the last 20 years, virtually all of the canning facilities within Midtown have closed their doors, including most recently Del Monte's facility along The Alameda. Only Del Monte's canning plant south of West San Carlos Street, with its distinctive water tower and warehouse structures, remains as a testimony of Midtown's historic fruit processing role. The area now serves as a predominantly light industrial and service commercial district, enjoying direct access to I-280, SR-87 and downtown San Jose.

Downtown and Regional Context

Midtown's strategic location, adjacent to downtown San Jose and at the heart of the State's and County's expanding transportation system, gives it a particular importance within the region. The intensification of properties within Midtown can contribute to the significant revitalization efforts underway in the downtown and reinforce the considerable public investment that is being made in the development and expansion of regional commuter and light rail transit service. The creation of a new community of residents and employees, within easy walking distance of transit and the downtown, provides an alternative to the more decentralized and land-consumptive

patterns of suburban development that have contributed to regional traffic congestion, air quality deterioration, and loss of open space and agricultural lands. By providing a major infill opportunity at the heart of the region, Midtown can assist San Jose in balancing quality of life objectives with the need for economic development.

In the 1980s, the City of San Jose established the goal of transforming its downtown area into a vital 24-hour mixed-use area. Ten years later, considerable progress has been made toward the realization of this goal. The completion of the City of San Jose Convention Center, the Children's Discovery Museum, the San Jose Community Arena (1993), and the expansion of the Museum of Modern Art have secured the downtown as the principal cultural and recreational destination of the South Bay. A pilot version of the planned Technology Museum has also been established in the downtown to showcase the considerable achievements of the Silicon Valley in advancing international computer technology.

In addition to major public facilities, the City and its Redevelopment Agency have played an active role in encouraging private investment within the downtown. Public assistance in the realization of numerous commercial developments (e.g., the Fairmont Hotel, the Hilton Hotel, the Silicon Valley Financial Center) has directly contributed to downtown's emerging role as the business center of the region.

A key component in the City's program of downtown revitalization is the establishment of a diverse resident population that can benefit from the cultural, recreational and commercial amenities of the area, and that can contribute to the creation of an active day and nighttime environment. Toward this end, the City and Redevelopment Agency have approved numerous higher density mixed-use housing projects, resulting in the construction of over 750 units since 1987. A particular emphasis of San Jose policy is to locate housing in close proximity to

transit to reduce automobile dependency and promote ridership patronage.

The County of Santa Clara, in conjunction with the City of San Jose, has made considerable strides in the development of its light rail transit system. In April of 1992, the Guadalupe LRT corridor was completed, providing service between Edenvale to the south and the city of Santa Clara to the north. This line, which passes through the heart of downtown along a 12-block transit mall, provides residents with direct service to the three major employment centers of the region: Edenvale, downtown, and North San Jose. Several additional transit lines are also planned, including: the Vasona LRT corridor, which will connect downtown with Los Gatos; the Evergreen-Capitol corridor, providing service to southeast San Jose; and the Stevens Creek line, which will extend service along West San Carlos Street and Stevens Creek Boulevard to Cupertino.

Land Use Context

Development within Midtown is mainly comprised of light industrial, manufacturing, service commercial and public transportation uses (Figure 4). The area is bordered by residential uses on the west (the St. Leo's, Buena Vista and Burbank neighborhoods), the San Jose Community Arena (under construction) on the north, the "frame" area of downtown San Jose and Los Gatos Creek on the east, and a mixture of light and heavy industrial uses south to I-280. Three rail corridors, including a main passenger and freight line, transect Midtown in a north-south direction. The zoning designations within the project area are primarily industrial (M1 and M4), reflecting existing and historic uses.

Midtown includes portions of two Neighborhood Business Districts (NBDs): The Alameda NBD and West San Carlos NBD. Neighborhood Business Districts have been established by the City of San Jose to encourage the revitalization of key neighborhood-serving commercial centers

through economic incentives, public improvements and design assistance.

Midtown is in predominantly private ownership with over 100 properties, ranging in size from less than one acre to major parcels, including the 7.3-acre Union Ice Company and the 8.2-acre Del Monte property. Key publicly owned lands include: the Cahill Station area and rail right-of-way held by the Joint Powers Authority; adjacent parking areas owned by Santa Clara County and the Redevelopment Agency; a 4.6-acre property owned by Santa Clara County Transit District at Sunol and West San Carlos Streets; and the 12.5-acre former Sears site owned by the County Office of Education. The latter property has been identified as surplus and is on the market for private acquisition.

Because of the historic evolution of the city around it, Midtown finds itself adjacent to some distinctive areas, including the dynamic downtown and some of the city's most desirable and historic neighborhoods, including Willow Glen, Shasta-Hanchett, St. Leo's, and the Rose Garden. The transformation of Midtown provides an opportunity to create stronger linkages to these areas through the introduction of new activities and streetscape and open space improvements (Figure 5). These linkages could assist in making Midtown part of the "success" of these adjacent areas and, in turn, provide complementary uses that would reinforce the attractiveness and viability of the neighborhoods themselves. The edges of the planning area present a wide range of conditions to which future development will need to respond. As illustrated in Figure 6, these include:

- The single-family cottages along Wilson and Sunol Streets that provide an eastern edge to the St. Leo's neighborhood;
- The small shops and businesses that comprise The Alameda Neighborhood Business District;
- The 110-foot high Community Arena between Stockton and Autumn Streets along

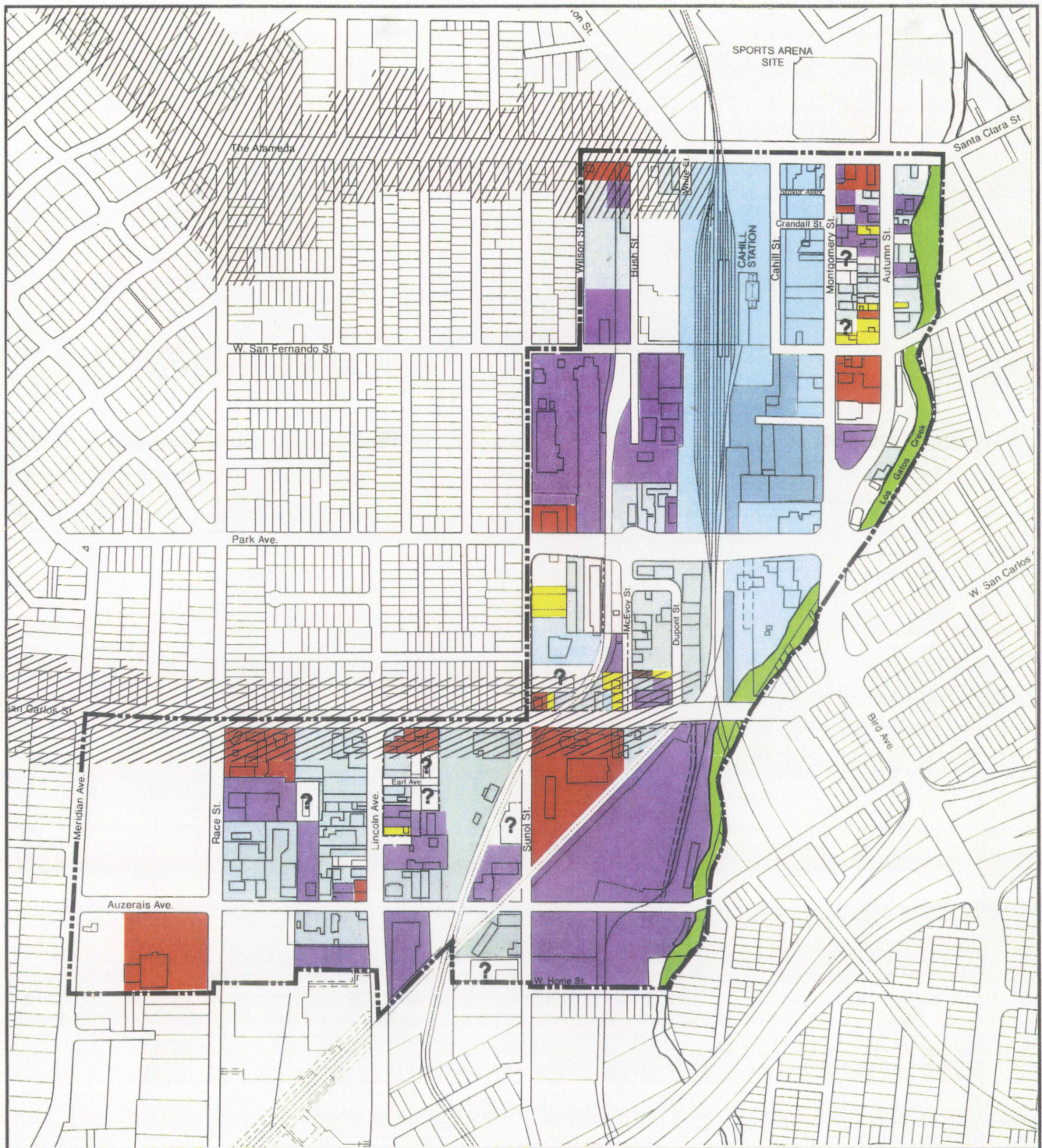
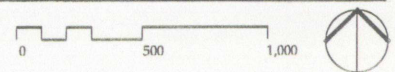













Figure 4
EXISTING LAND USE



	Residential		Utilities
	Retail/Restaurant/Entertainment		Public/Quasi Public
	Service/Auto-Related		Vacant
	Office		Unidentified Occupants
	Manufacturing/Wholesale/Distribution/Storage		Public Park/Open Space

 Neighborhood Business District